

Umair A. Shah, M.D., M.P.H.
Executive Director
2223 West Loop South
Houston, Texas 77027
Tel: (713) 439-6000
Fax: (713) 439-6080



Elizabeth Perez, M.P.H.
Director, Office of Communications,
Education & Engagement
2223 West Loop South
Houston, Texas 77027
Tel: (713) 439-6293
Fax: (713) 439-6362

Media Hotline
713.439.6911

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Harris County Public Health Launches Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

In 2016, more than 1,000 children in Harris County tested positive for elevated blood levels

HOUSTON — Harris County Public Health (HCPH) today announces its new [Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program](#) (CLPPP) aimed at reducing lead exposure and poisoning among children in Harris County. According to the Texas Department of State Health Services, 1,016 children had elevated blood lead levels in 2016.

This program will provide:

- Educational outreach to the public on the dangers and prevention of lead poisoning
- Information to medical providers on recommendations and requirements for lead testing
- Lead testing at two Harris County WIC [locations](#) (Antoine and Shaver)
- Case coordination for children with high levels lead of lead, to identify the lead source and ensure the poisoning discontinues

CLPPP is currently providing case coordination for 40 cases and expect that number to increase. It is also creating a database to track, evaluate and monitor county cases. Most families affected by lead poisoning are low-income.

“Many families aren’t aware of the dangers of lead poisoning. They don’t know this can affect their child’s cognitive development,” said Dr. Umair A. Shah, executive director for Harris County Public Health. “That’s why this program is so important. We want to bring more awareness to the issue in Harris County,” he said.

Lead poisoning in children can cause brain development delays, speech and language problems, damage to the nervous system and kidneys, and in extremely high cases, death. Most significantly, there are often no symptoms. Lead poisoning is most often obtained when young children eat chipped-off pieces of lead paint. Lead paint was banned in 1978, but children living in homes built before then could be at risk. Lead is also found in products from overseas like jewelry, toys, pottery, spices and cosmetics.

HCPH recommends children age 6 or younger be tested for lead by a medical provider, at least once. Children receiving [WIC](#) can be tested at HCPH’s Antoine and Shaver WIC clinics.

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HCPH is the local public health agency for the Harris County, Texas jurisdiction. It provides a wide variety of public health activities and services aimed at improving the health and well-being of the Harris County community.

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